

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

I believe that the coherent strategy is a sensible and desirable option to have in second-strike circumstances in which we are [a variety of] trying to make the best of a bad situation. Then the only justification it requires is a reasonable possibility that it might work. But it would be foolish to count on it working to the ~~the~~ point that it would form the basis for a belief that we could strike first without retaliation. Nor does this possibility provide a basis for buying more missiles.

16. Memory.

Live Oak set up, spring 1959. Rogers: initial plans called for Tripartite Platoon; then more; GW.

1) Platoon: ^{3rd} Free Style / Rocketstroke

2) Battalion: ^{3rd}

3) Div: ^{3rd} from Ball (not finally approved.)

Tripartite, Action only

(D. Armstrong; (~ from 1962) (NSC action: 100?))

US Approved Sequence: I: Platoon (that intention to show by force).
(approved by NAC on Nov 3, 1962, Cuban Crisis)

II. Buildup; maritime actions (3 Aug, 1 Marine; 2 Aug, 1 Marine; (Chin. left: - in action in corridor). 1 Aug: 8 in all).

III (NATO Reinforced Alert): Beacon plans (NATO)

Buildup begin with Live Oak Battalion (that SC intention after buildup).
first Prime: in plan. ^{Marcons:} 4. Beacon, SACRED plan.

Beacon Charlie I 1 div (from Ball or Charlie I)

Charlie II 2 div

Charlie III

Charlie IV 4 divs possible 2 areas.

IV Beacon Beams: small number of areas

ASP

Acheson draft on The Berlin Crisis June 27--July 6, 1961

Thus we are continually thrown back on the necessity of devising, and starting quickly, a course of conduct which will change the present, apparent Russian disbelief that the US would go to nuclear war over Berlin rather than submit. This report submits a plan to do this. Before coming to the plan, an early, secret, and vital decision is necessary.

C. The decision to Resort to Nuclear War, If Necessary

Nothing could be more dangerous than to embark upon a course of action of the sort described in this paper in the absence of a decision to accept nuclear war rather than accede to the demands which K is now making, or their substantial equivalent.

To do so would be a policy of bluff, with disaster as the consequence of the bluff being called. The disaster might even take the form of our receiving a nuclear strike if the impression we made was better than our determination.

...All that can be safely said is that K probably would not incur the certainty of nuclear war over Berlin if he could see far enough ahead that war was certain. But, given his background and the inherent obscurity of the situation, we cannot be sure that before events had passed beyond control he would see that war was certain.

((Was this decision made? Doubtful. Was it really necessary? Did K need the degree of assurance that nuclear war was coming that an all-out US persuasive effort reflecting an actual decision would induce?

How about K's fears of: a) the instability risked in a large-scale non-nuclear effort, instability in the satellites?

b) the likelihood that his own state of mind during large-scale non-nuclear hostilities--in particular, his fears then of nuclear war to come--would lead him to retreat then, at great cost. ?))

C: his fear that, with or without a prior decision by the US, the risk of nuclear war would be unacceptably high if the US should once become involved in significant ground operations? This is the most impressive; it would suggest that we make an all-out commitment to become involved in combat operations, whether or not we commit ourselves to take it to nuclear war.))

(strengthen non-nuclear forces, and capability to strengthen further fast; tighten control of nuclear weapons in Europe, to permit substantial use of no -nuclear force without unintended escalation; SAC in prolonged alert; civil defense measures, possibly construction of fall-out shelters; prepare plans for and request funds for major budget increase in case situation deteriorates--might be deterrent.))

...~~Nuclear~~ ~~policy~~ As a nation, we have little capacity for deceiving others. At best, we can hope to convince the Soviets that we will undertake dangerous or expensive actions if that is our real intention.

((Schelling premise; leads to "real commitment" policy.))

World Opinion: Khrushchev has been trying to present his demands regarding Berlin in such a way as to maintain his peace posture with the neutrals and convince them that his object is to eliminate "hotbeds of war." It is important to frustrate this effort; the Soviets are much more dangerous when they believe that their propaganda has put world opinion upon their side: They are apt to believe that they can take greater risks because we will be inhibited by adverse opinion from taking effective counter-action.

2.

((Thus, an attitude toward the importance of convincing the world: THE SOVIETS BELIEVE US TO BE STRONGLY INHIBITED BY ADVERSE OPINION__ AND LIKEWISE INHIBITED BY A WEAK LEGAL CASE. Two ways of influencing their expectations: a) swing world opinion to our side; develop a strong legal case; b) demonstrate that we are not inhibited by the lack of either; but must then succeed, or otherwise we will be suspected of having "learned our lesson." Bay of Pigs may have strengthened these Sov attitudes; and Suez? But, admitting U-2; and Cuba; and Gulf of Tonkin, may be demonstrations.))

Use of force:

Start with a sizable problem, say a battalion, to establish that access to Berlin is physically blocked. Then resort to an operation involving substantial non-nuclear force...The purpose of the operation would not be the military one of defeating all the Soviet forces which might oppose our forces; this would not be feasible.

It would be the political purpose of moving the Soviets to negotiate a resumption of access by giving the most convincing demonstration of which the West was capable that the Western Allies were not prepared to submit to Soviet demands and would use whatever force was necessary, up to and including general war, in resisting them.

The Western force should thus be large enough so that the Soviets would appreciate the great risk that conflict involving this force would, if not terminated by early negotiations, get out of control and escalate into nuclear war.

This means, among other things, that:

- a) The force should not be susceptible of being stopped by the GDR. The JCS believe that 7 divisions and 4 air wings would achieve this end.
- b) The force, together with the other ground forces available for the battle, should be able to defend itself with non-nuclear weapons until it was plain that the political purpose would not be achieved and that nuclear weapons must be used. An opinion of the JCS leads to the belief that such a force is well within US and allied capability.

The initial force to be deployed across the zonal boundary might, for example, be one division--with one in reserve.

This was the course discussed by the JCS in their April 28 memo to the Sec Def, which indicated that "the use of substantial non-nuclear ~~for~~ ground forces, in the magnitude of two divisions, could facilitate negotiations, to restore ground access to Berlin and compel the Sovs to face the imminent possibility of a broadening of the conflict as well as the possibility of general war, should they persist in obstructing access to Berlin." The annex to the memo said: "A division could fight well for several days, long enough to accept reinforcement by another US or Allied division...If an enemy force of not more than 3-4 divisions opposes the allied force...it is quite likely that we could support a two division force indefinitely in East Germany."

The Soviets might conclude, at this point, that the danger of escalation was getting out of hand and move toward a negotiated settlement...If, on the contrary, the Soviets threw in more force, the Allied operation would need to be reinforced. The seven division force mentioned by the JCS might then come into play.

3. This force could continue the non-nuclear combat in the face of Soviet/GDR reinforcements and thus provide more time for the Soviets to appreciate the risks of the course on which they were embarked and to seek an acceptable negotiated settlement. ((Note: This phrase now in context of a US initiative.)

After a period of about 1-2 weeks this allied force would need further reinforcement--depending on the Communist strength thrown against it. At some point, either at the end of this 1-2 weeks or later if the seven division force were to be reinforced, a judgment would have to be reached that we had done all that was feasible to convince Khrushchev that the US would, and indeed, must--in order to preserve its army, its allies, and itself--use nuclear weapons.

((Acheson states everything in terms of convincing K of US willingness to use everything, including nuclear weapons; but his proposals are all in terms of preparing to confront K with non-nuclear combat. Assumption that such preparations, and such combat, are the most effective means of convincing K that nuclear combat is final, certain resort. Possible counter-argument not faced explicitly....as it should be, if Acheson assumes--as do Europeans--that K's conviction of nuclear war is the basic necessity. His actual proposals suggest rather that we confront K with certainty of non-nuclear combat, with the threat of uncontrolled escalation lying behind it (rather than with: a) risk of immediate uncontrolled escalation; b) certainty of US deliberate choice of nuclear war, based on prior commitment.))

Foreword:

At present, K has demonstrated that he believes his will will prevail because the US and its Allies will not do what is necessary to stop him.

..Amb. Thompson has stated the principal objectives of the Berlin offensive:

1. To stabilize the regime in East Germany and prepare the way for the eventual recognition of the East German regime.
2. To legalize the eastern frontiers of Germany.
3. To neutralize Berlin as a first step and prepare for its eventual take-over by the GDR.
5. To discredit the US or at least seriously damage our prestige.
4. To ~~discredit~~ weaken if not break up the NATO alliance.

It is plain that, if carried to its conclusion, the Berlin offensive strikes at the power and world position of the US. Even its more limited purposes are gravely damaging to the US and the Western Alliance. This is the nature of the crisis which confronts us: not the fate of a city, or of its two and one-half million people, or even the integrity of our pledged word.

...West Berlin has been protected, in the last analysis, by the fear that interference with the city, or with access to it, would result in war between the US and the SU. War, as used here, means eventually nuclear war.

If K now contemplates embarking on a course of interference, and later does so, it means that his fear of war resulting has declined. He has been quoted as saying as much.

The capability of US nuclear power to devastate the SU has not declined over the past two years. The decline in the effectiveness of the deterrent, therefore, must lie in a change in Sov appraisal of US willingness to go to nuclear war over the issue which K reiterates his determination to present.

4. This being so, the problem is how to restore the credibility of the deterrent--that is, how to cause K to revise his apparent appraisal of US willingness to resort to nuclear war, rather than to submit to Soviet demands.

(*) claims: Threat to use nuclear weapons immediately would not be believed. And plan to follow a battalion probe with use of nuclear weapons: doesn't do enough to convince Sovs of US will to use nucs, before actually using them.

July 19, 1961: EUR (Kohler) to SecState memo

Recent reports of unrest in East Germany and the increased refugee flow to West Berlin have led Amb. Dowling to raise the question of what the US would do if the "East German population should rise again." He went on to express the view that "for us to remain on the sidelines in the event of another June 17 would mean an end of our prestige and influence in Germany, even were the Federal Republic and population in the West to follow our precept."

...indicate that there has been an increase in discontent in East Germany. This is evidently due to the unsatisfactory economic conditions, particularly food shortages. There has also recently been a marked increase in the refugee flow to West Berlin. This appears to be partially due to the tough Soviet line on Berlin, which has led to the fear that the West Berlin "escape hatch" will be slammed shut. A contributing factor has been the end of the school year in East Germany, which has provided a good ti for people planning to leave to make good their escape.

While there is no sign at present that an explosion is imminent, either of two contingencies could arise. First, and in our view the more likely, the East Germans could take measures designed to halt the refugee flow. Second, if they eliminated the West Berlin "escape valve" and if the economic crisis seriously deepens, unrest could turn into violence.

While the situation in East Germany is undoubtedly conditioning Soviet policy on Germany, it is difficult to say what effect it will have on Soviet decisions. For the moment at least, Sov policy is to encourage the East German regime to get its economic house in order and to tolerate the refugee flow, while at the same time pressing toward a decision on Berlin. Ulbricht would, however, apparently like to end the refugee flow, and the present flood--if continued--could induce the Sovs to give him the green light....

We are at present discussing within the Dept and with other interested agencies the implications of these developments for US policy. The consensus thus far is that, although it is in the US interest for unrest in East Germany to cause the Sovs to slacken their pressures on Berlin, we would not like to see the outbreak of serious disturbances. Nor would we would like to see the East German regime take measures to halt the refugee flow, particularly if this involved--as it could--the division of Berlin.

On balance, we believe that the Sovs are creating enough difficulties for themselves in East Germany, without the US taking a hand. We believe, therefore, that the US should not do anything at this time to exacerbate the situation.

In the meantime, we are examining how the US can best exploit the Sov's difficulties, by helping to advertise them to the world, and by reminding the Sovs quietly that the US is watching events in East Germany with interest and--perhaps temporary--forbearance.

We are also preparing plans to meet either of the two contingencies discussed above: 1) that the EG regime should take measures to half the flow of refugees, or 2) there should be serious disorders in EG.

(Ausland)

If K became seriously concerned about the situation in EG, he could either call for a showdown in Berli or slacken the pressure in order to give the regime time to get its economy in order.